

Gold Medal Schools

Winter Newsletter 2006

For more information, please talk to your principal or visit www.hearthighway.org/gms

Introduction

Gold Medal Schools (GMS) is working to improve the health of Utah's kids. Your school is making policy and environmental changes that create a healthier atmosphere for your students and staff. After all, studies show that healthy kids make healthy learners.



GMS have safe and active routes to school, have healthy food choices, encourage physical activity, fight tobacco, and reward kids with non-food prizes. Each school determines the pace of the program with help from mentors (usually a college student majoring in health) principals, a teacher or PTA member, food service staff, and local and state health departments.

Five Years of Gold Medal Schools

- Since 2001, more than 200 schools have been a part of GMS.
- GMS has reached nearly 100,000 students and faculty.
- GMS is in over 80 percent of Utah's school districts.
- GMS have walked 5 million miles. That is nearly 11 trips to the moon and back.



Miss Utah Walks With GMS

Shortly before Julia Bachison was crowned Miss Utah last June, she partnered with GMS, promoting her platform "Healthy Weight for Life." The "royal" pink-tennis-shoes-wearing role model has walked with more than 30 schools so far and plans to visit every GMS in the state by the end of this school year. During her visits, Julia sings, promotes physical activity and nutrition, and walks the Gold Medal Mile with the kids.

Each month Julia makes a special visit to the GMS of the Month and passes out orange silicone wristbands with the engraved phrases "Healthy Weight for Life" and "Gold Medal Schools". The bands remind students to stay active and continue the healthy habits they started as a student at a GMS.

Julia represented the state in the Miss America pageant on January 21st. We would like to thank her and congratulate her on winning the preliminary lifestyle and fitness category.



Make your home a Gold Medal Home

Nutrition:

Making better family nutrition choices doesn't have to be difficult. Here are a few quick and easy changes you can make that will have a life-long effect:

1. Use low-fat or no-fat dairy products in your recipes to reduce calories and fat.
2. Put a bowl of fruit out on the kitchen counter or have cut up vegetables in the fridge.
3. Choose portions no larger than your fist. Use a smaller plate; it won't look so skimpy.

4. Eat a low-fat, high-fiber breakfast; it may make you less hungry later in the day.
5. Reward yourself and your family with something other than food. Treat your family to a special activity you like to do together, such as swimming, biking, or skiing.
6. Limit eating and snacking to the kitchen and dining room. Discourage "grazing" in front of the TV or computer.

Physical Activity:

Physical inactivity is a major risk factor causing chronic disease rates in the United States to rise, but you can do something about it! Here are a few physical activity ideas:

1. Active birthday parties are a great way to keep your kids fit. Celebrate your child's birthday with movement, music, and imagination. Take the party to a local kids' gym.
2. Select birthday gifts that involve physical activity like a tennis racket or soccer ball.
3. Watch less TV and choose activities that your family can do together, such as building a snowman, shoveling snow, skiing, snowshoeing or even window-shopping.
4. Parents set the best example by being active and making physical activity part of the family's daily routine. Neighborhood walks are a great chance to catch up.
5. Look out for community events like the Get Active Utah Fitness Challenge or Salt Lake Kids Marathon.

Physical Activity Fact:
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that kids participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

Safe Routes to School

Gold Medal Schools now has Child Access Routing Plan (CARP) Kits to create and strengthen your Safe Routes to School plans! Safe Routes examines conditions around schools and improves safety while reducing traffic and air pollution in the surrounding areas. Walking and bicycling to school provide an excellent opportunity to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

Tobacco Free Schools Smoke Screener's Video:

Children can receive mixed messages about smoking and tobacco from movies and television. Your school can help students make sense of these messages by showing "Smoke Screeners," an educational video that draws attention to how smoking is often normalized or glamorized in the media. Smoke Screeners works to help students make informed decisions on tobacco use and is available upon request by your school Mentor.

GMS also provides access to other educational programs like Tobacco on Trial, the "Truth from Youth" Anti-Tobacco Advertising Contest, and Project TNT. For more information about tobacco prevention or how you can get involved, please visit www.tobaccofreeutah.org or contact the **Utah Tobacco Quit Line** at 1-888-567-TRUTH.

